



*Teachers & Parents as Partners*

# Better Behavior Through Family Engagement: Tailoring Behavior Interventions for Individual Students and Families

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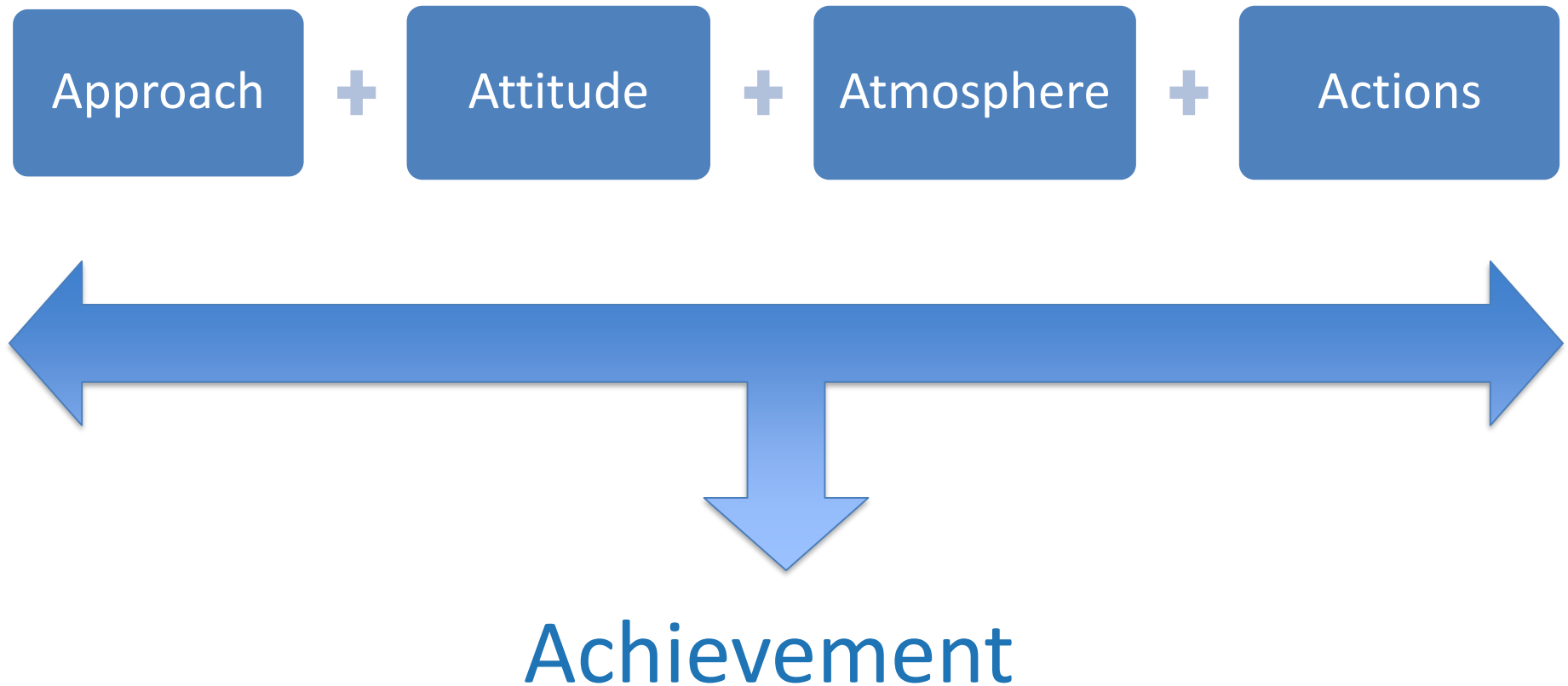


**NEBRASKA CENTER FOR RESEARCH ON  
CHILDREN, YOUTH, FAMILIES & SCHOOLS**

# Objectives

1. Family-school partnership overview
2. Teachers And Parents as Partners description
3. Tools for promoting family-school partnerships at your schools

# The Five A's for Partnering With Parents



# Approach

- The overarching perspective that schools and *families are essential* for student success
  - There is a *shared responsibility* for educating and socializing children
  - The emphasis is on *relationships*, rather than separate roles

# Attitude

- Firm *belief* that teachers and parents working together is more effective than working alone
  - All families have strengths
  - Parents can help their children succeed
  - There is no room for blame; no one is at “fault”

# Atmosphere

- *Physical signs* that convey interest in families
  - Family-friendly bulletin boards
  - Welcome signs in several languages
  - Pictures of students and families
- *Affective climate* (the “vibe”) that is inviting to families
  - Conveys genuine interest
  - Warm, inviting communication

# Actions

## ***Actions = Partnership***

- Intentional; a way of doing business
- Communication
- Complementary and connected family-school experiences
- Collaborative problem-solving
- Student-focused, but *relationship-based*

# The Five A's for Partnering with Families

Approach

+

Attitude

+

Atmosphere

+

Actions



Achievement



# Self-Reflection:

## A Process for Selecting Actions

Assess approach, attitudes, atmosphere and actions by evaluating:

- Communication
- Beliefs
- Recognition of values and practices
- Cultural awareness
- Invitations

Communication <i>How well do staff members demonstrate the following:</i>	Very Poorly	Poorly	Okay	Pretty Well	Very Well
1. Make validating statements regarding parents' efforts and strengths (e.g., skills, knowledge, resources).	1	2	3	4	5
2. Provide parents with developmental and other information that helps them make decisions about their children.	1	2	3	4	5
3. Provide examples or demonstrations for parents.	1	2	3	4	5
4. Engage parents in frequent and open two-way information sharing.	1	2	3	4	5
5. Work with parents to set mutual goals for their child's development.	1	2	3	4	5
6. Ask parents about their efforts to meet child and family goals, including successes and difficulties.	1	2	3	4	5
7. Communicate with parents about the academic, behavior, and social performance of their child.	1	2	3	4	5
8. Give parents adequate information about curriculum; provide parents with daily information about what their children do in the classroom.	1	2	3	4	5
9. Convey (in a sincere manner) admiration and/or recognition to the family regarding what they have accomplished to date.	1	2	3	4	5
10. Comment to the parents about the strengths, accomplishments, or positive aspects of the child.	1	2	3	4	5

<b>Cultural awareness and sensitivity</b> <i>How well do staff members demonstrate the following:</i>	Very Poorly	Poorly	Okay	Pretty Well	Very Well
29. Communicate and provide materials in the families' native language.	1	2	3	4	5
30. Use activities that incorporate different types of families (single-parent, grandparent guardians) reflective of those in classroom.	1	2	3	4	5
31. Have an understanding of, are open to, and respect the culture and value system of families they serve.	1	2	3	4	5
32. Make special efforts to reach families from all racial, cultural, and language groups.	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Invitations to parents</b> <i>How well do staff members demonstrate the following:</i>	Very Poorly	Poorly	Okay	Pretty Well	Very Well
33. Frequently invite parents to participate in their child's learning at home and at school.	1	2	3	4	5
34. Provide opportunities for parents to actively participate in classroom activities.	1	2	3	4	5
35. Make parents feel comfortable being in the classroom (e.g. wanted, useful, belong there).	1	2	3	4	5

# From Self-Reflection to Action

- Define family engagement goals and desired outcomes (for family, child)
- Identify strengths (potential resources)
- Determine one area in need of attention
- Specify steps and procedures to meet goal
- Plan for implementation (what, who, how, when)
- Evaluate progress toward family engagement goal, and outcomes for child

# Types of Family-School Relationships

	Families Separate from Schools	Family Involvement	Family-School Partnerships
<b>Decision-Making and Roles</b>	Teachers and school personnel know best and should make decisions	Emphasis on teacher's role in promoting learning and how parents can support it	Parents and teachers work together to determine the best way to help the student
<b>Communication</b>	Occurs rarely	Infrequent, problem-focused, and teacher-led	Frequent, positive, and bi-directional
<b>Diversity</b>	Cultural/language differences are insurmountable	Cultural/language differences are seen as barriers to overcome	Cultural/language differences are respected, appreciated, and reinforced

# What Is a Partnership?

- A **relationship** involving close collaboration between parents, schools, and service providers with clear *rights* and *responsibilities*
- Relationships that are:
  - Valued
  - Balanced
  - Cooperative and interdependent
  - Based on mutual respect, trust, and open communication
  - Student-centered

(Sheridan & Kratochwill, 2008, p. 1)

# Support for Family-School Partnerships

When parents are engaged in their children's education, their children do better. Decades of research has shown that family engagement has positive effects on children's behavior and academic achievement.

# Family-School Partnerships in Context

- Family-school partnerships can leverage resources in underserved communities
- Family-school partnerships have been demonstrated to be effective for diverse students
- The unique context and characteristics must be considered when developing family-school partnerships



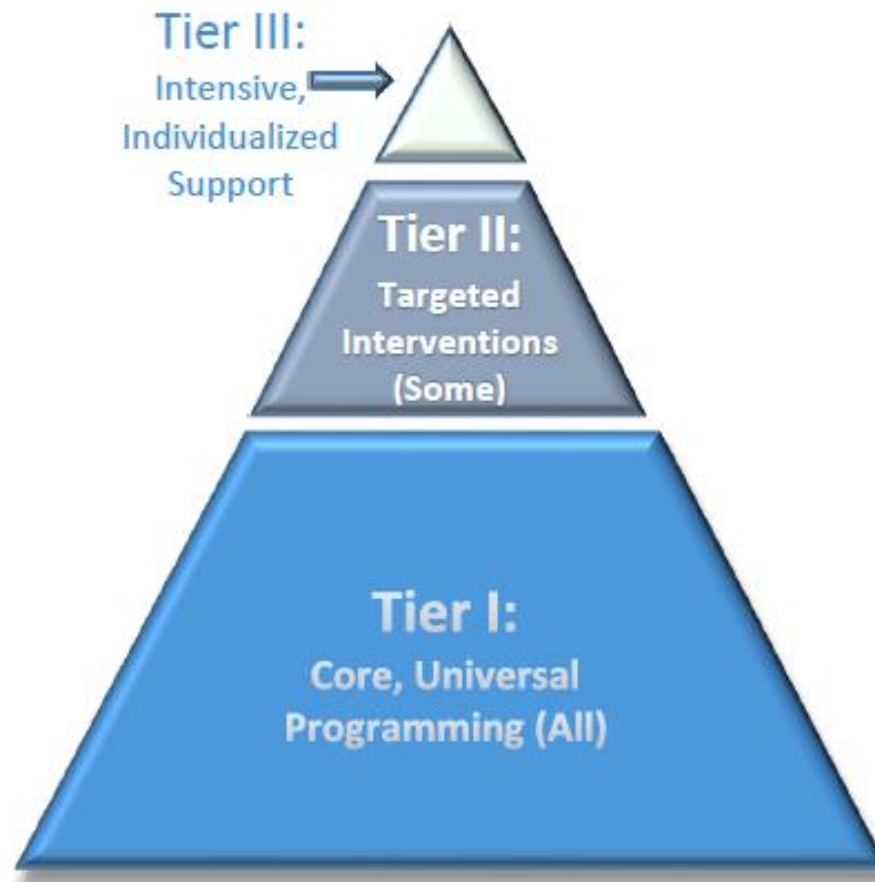
# Context Examples

- Latino Families
  - Latino students are the fastest growing ethnic group, and currently, one in four U.S. students is Latino/a
  - Parents of Latino/a students report feeling misunderstood and unsure of school expectations
  - There is often a mismatch between teacher-parent perceptions of their relationship with one another
  - Research shows when schools and Latino families work together the result is better outcomes for students

# Context Examples

- Rural Families
  - Nebraska has 225 non-urban school districts and is ranked #4 among the states in numbers of small rural school districts
  - Rural schools face unique barriers to partnership
    - Limited access and resources, isolation, lack of privacy and stigma
  - Family-school partnerships have been shown to benefit rural students even more than urban students

# Strengthening Family-School Partnerships in Schools



*Family-school partnerships are essential at every tier of multi-tiered systems of support*

# Tier I: Universal Support

- Intentional and structured strategies for communication and engagement
- Opportunities for promoting learning and behavior at home
- Family resource room at school

# Tier II: Targeted Interventions

- Parent integration into selected student interventions
- Home-school behavior change plans
- Emails/text messages between teacher and parent

# Tier III: Individualized Intervention

- Functional behavior assessment for home and school
- Tailored intervention strategies
  - Complementary across home and school
- Individualized parent and teacher support
- Frequent, scheduled, two-way communication

# Teachers and Parents as Partners<sup>\*</sup> (TAPP)

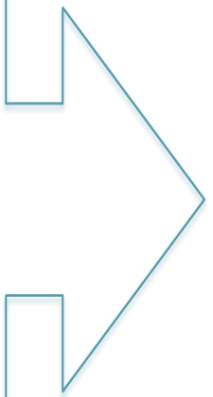
- TAPP is a structured, family-school partnership model for delivering Tier III services
- In TAPP, teachers and parents jointly identify and address behavioral concerns by providing input and developing plans to improve student outcomes

<sup>\*</sup>Also known as “conjoint behavioral consultation” (CBC; Sheridan & Kratochwill, 2008)



# What Does the *Research* Say?

Families  
and  
Schools  
as  
Partners



## ***For students:***

- Improved academic skills, social skills, engagement, behaviors
- School completion and long-term academic success

## ***For teachers:***

- Improved classroom management, instructional skills for all students
- Better relationships with students and parents
- More effective problem solving skills

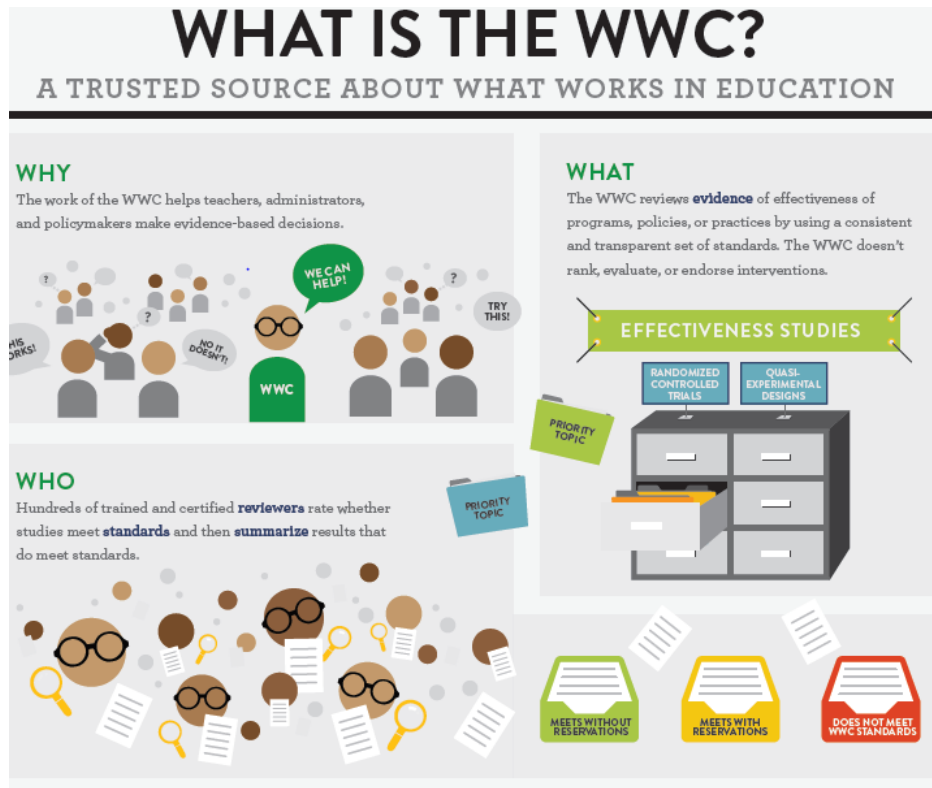
## ***For parents:***

- Better communication with teachers
- Better parenting skills and practices
- More learning opportunities at home



# Gold Standard Research

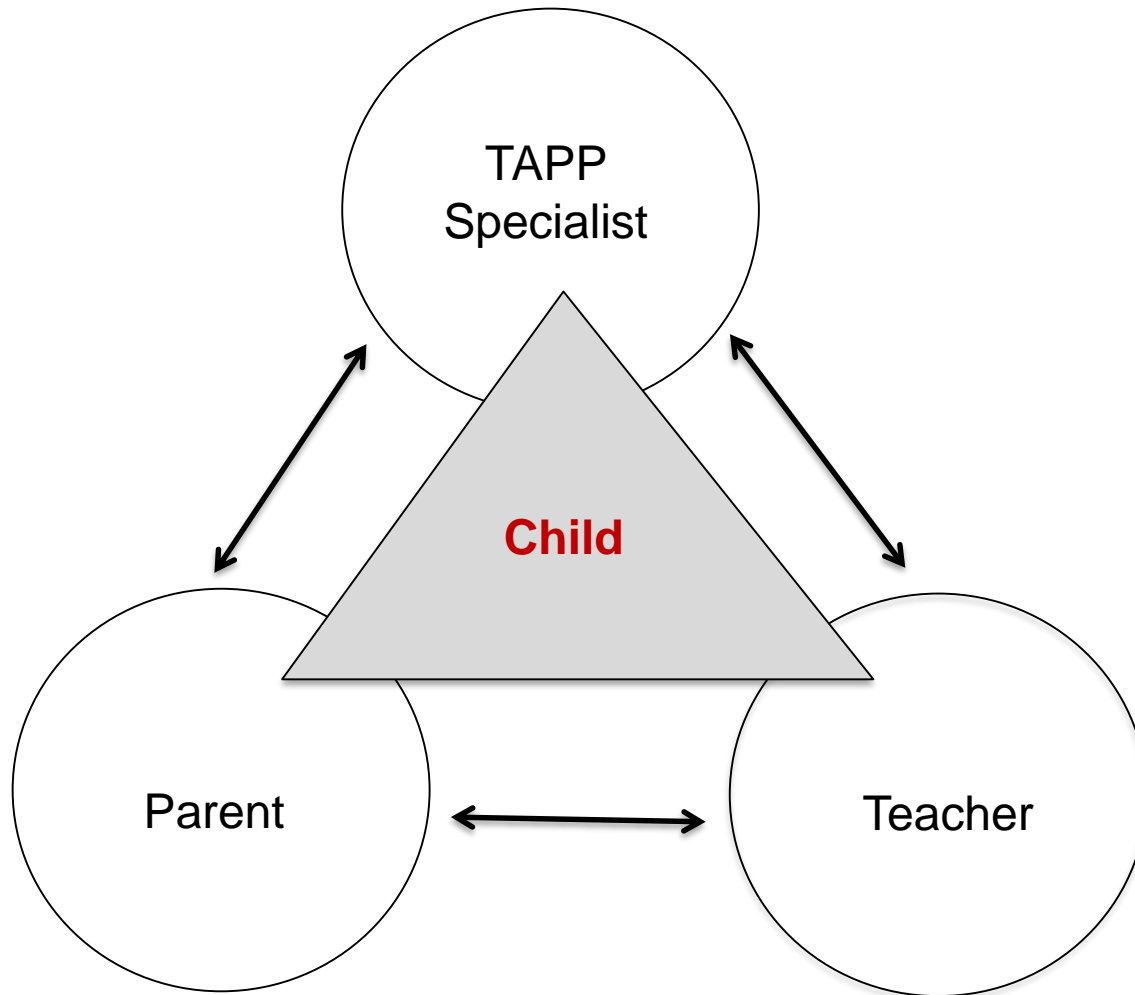
- What Works Clearinghouse
  - TAPP research *meets WWC standards without reservations*



# Key Ingredients of TAPP

- **Parents & teachers working together**
- A series of **4 to 5 structured, constructive, action-oriented meetings** to discuss, brainstorm, and problem solve
- **Mutually supportive and consistent strategies** are put into place at home and in the classroom

# TAPP Participants



# TAPP Problem-Solving Objectives

- Identify students' strengths and challenges
- Determine factors contributing to the challenges
- Identify solutions to address problems at home and school
- Discuss methods for putting plans into place
- Monitor progress at home and school
- Evaluate how the plans work

# TAPP Relationship Objectives

- Improve communication, knowledge, and understanding/perspective taking
- Promote shared ownership and joint responsibility
- Maximize opportunities to address challenges
- Increase expertise, capacity building and resource sharing across settings

# The TAPP Structure



## Building on Strengths

The TAPP process focuses on strengths to empower students and help them achieve their goals.



## Planning for Success

Together, teachers and parents monitor student behavior, then select strategies to use at home and school.



## Making Decisions Together

Parents and teachers check in with each other to review progress and adjust plans for student success.

# Empowering Joint Decision Making

- Collaborative approach to problem-solving that includes joint decision-making among team members
- Structured, data-based process that includes specified steps
- Emphasis on partnerships developed through communication/relationship-building

# Creating Meaningful Roles

- Important for parents and teachers to believe that positive outcomes for children occur as a result of their efforts
- Roles should be individualized and responsive to realities and demands
- Emphasis is on meaningful decision-making and strength-based capacity building – *competence and confidence* – to support the child



# Promoting Competence and Confidence

Collaborative decision-making requires skill, resources and support

- Communication
- Relationship building
- Selecting target behaviors
- Data-based decision-making
- Functional assessment
- Evidence-based intervention strategies
- Time and support

# Building on Strengths/Similarities

- Strengths are assets and can be used to address needs/concerns
  - Identify strengths of child, team members, and *partnership*
- Similarities or commonalities join team members
  - Build partnerships by providing opportunities to come together
  - Recognize and develop shared goals
  - Build understanding and trust

# Communicating Effectively

## Three consistent themes:

- Desire to develop a working partnership with all team members
- Crucial nature of everyone's input for children's progress
- Importance of working together to identify a mutually advantageous solution in light of problems (Weiss & Edwards, 1992)

# Communicating Effectively

Communication is foundational for:

- Sharing information about children's progress, needs, interests
- Establishing shared goals for children's development
- Sharing expectations regarding children's learning and behavior
- Sharing information about experiences and learning opportunities across settings
- Avoiding misunderstandings

# Responding to Cultural & Contextual Differences

- All cultures represented are respected and appreciated
- Culture is considered when communicating
- Insight into one's own biases and how they may impact your approach to partnerships
- Avoidance of deficit thinking

# TAPP Process Key Points

“Building relationships with parents is a process that begins before formal problem solving, permeates all interactions you have with parents, and evolves as the relationship matures.”

“TAPP provides structure that helps teachers and parents intervene effectively at school and at home.”

“TAPP is a recursive and dynamic process that begins with identifying a child’s strengths and challenges, and proceeds through data collection, intervention planning, implementation, and evaluation. The relationships, process, and strategies learned can have a long-lasting, positive effect.”

# Partnership-Building Strategies

1. Perspective taking
2. Strengthen Home-School Communication
3. Managing Conflict

# Partnership-Building Strategies

## 1. Perspective taking

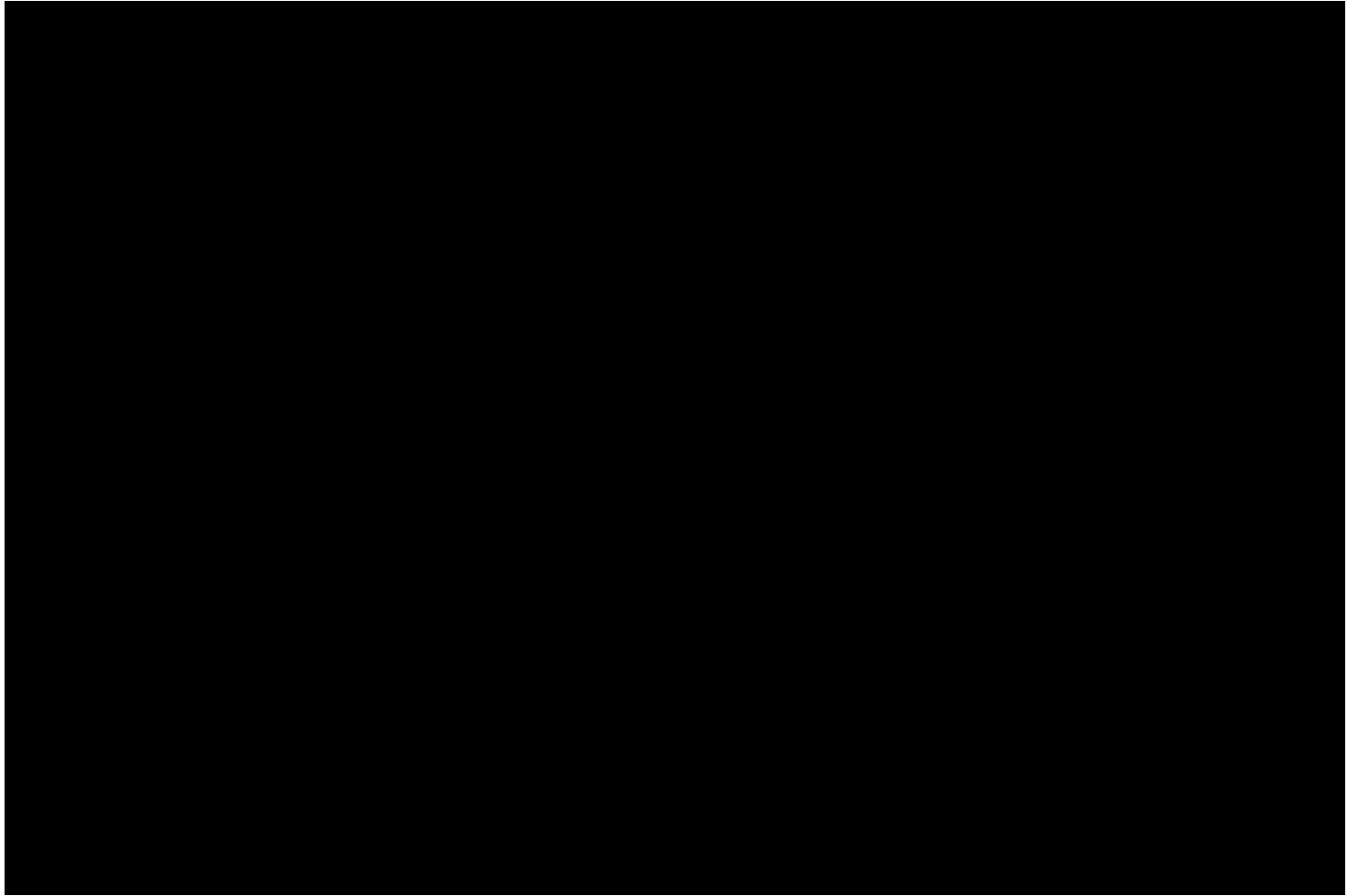
- Listen to and acknowledge different perspectives
- Adopt a non-deficit, non-blaming approach
- Be responsive



# Video Example



# Video Example

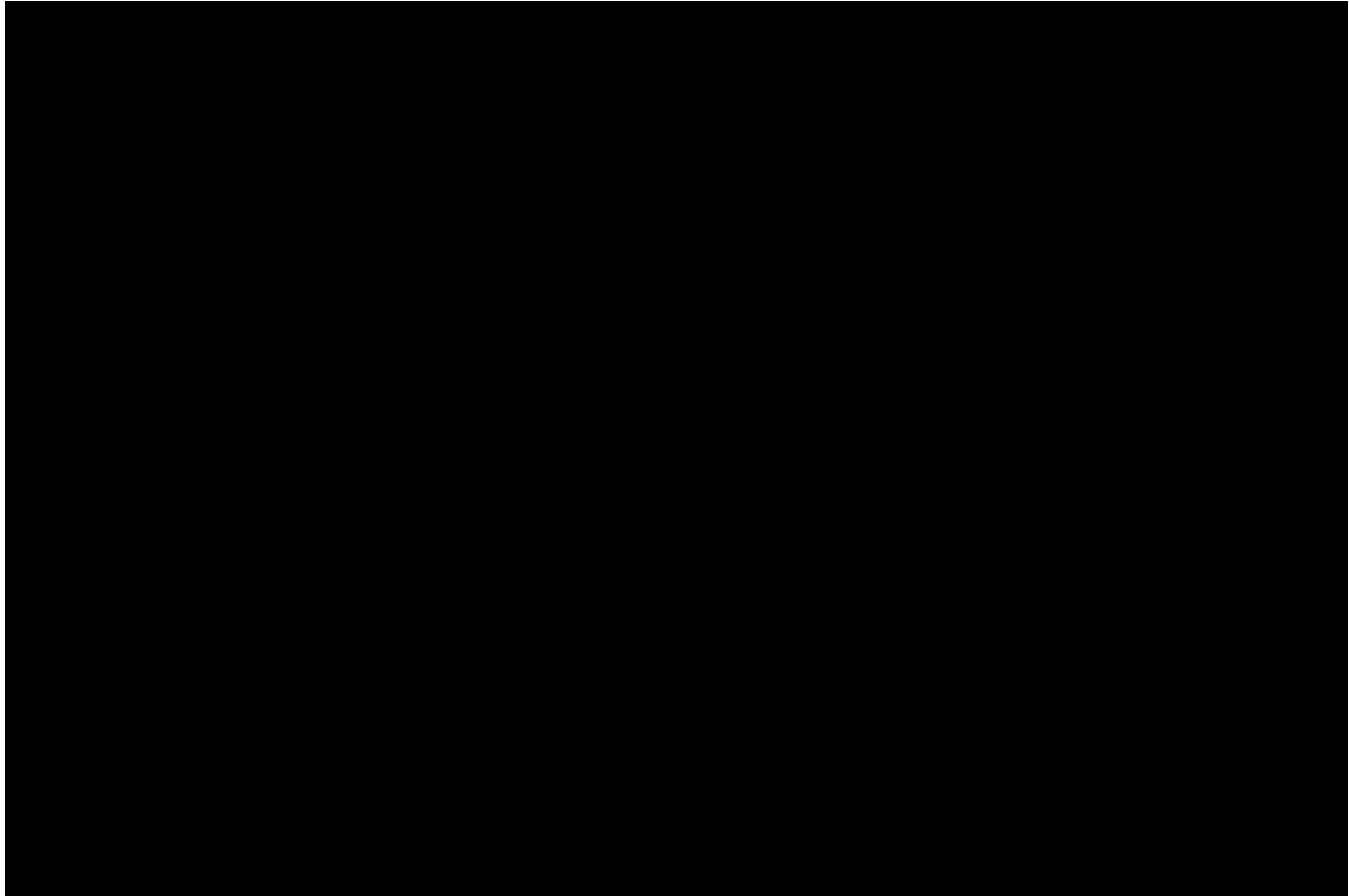


# Partnership-Building Strategies

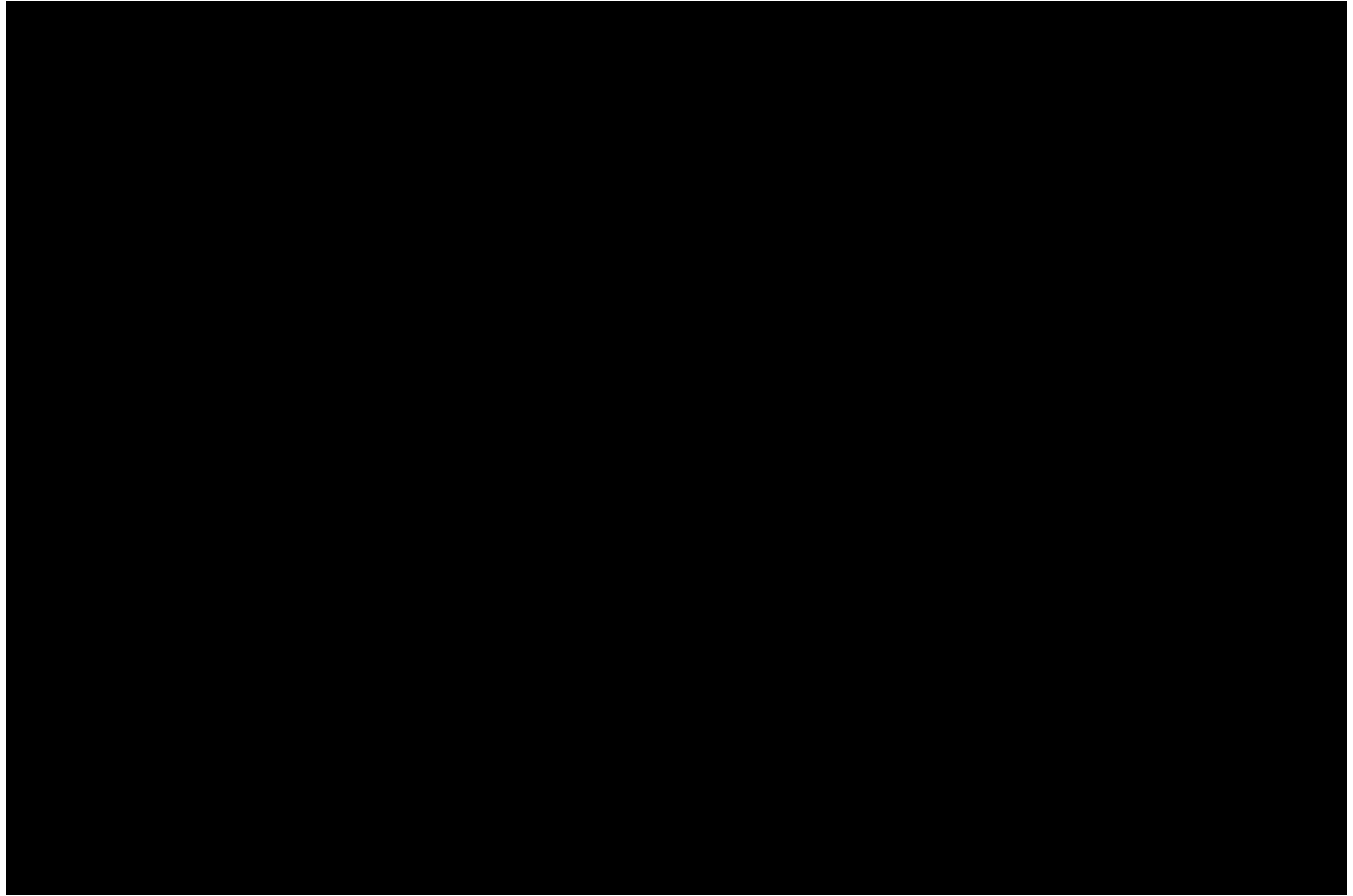
## 2. Strengthening home-school connections

- Point out similarities
- Create opportunities to come together
- Point out parent and teacher contributions
- Promote positive communication across home and school
- Use unifying language
- Create opportunities for meaningful, joint roles

# Video Example



# Video Example



# Partnership-Building Strategies

## *3. Managing Conflict*

- Focus on mutual goals
- Reframing
- Provide structure
- Read nonverbal language

# Video Example



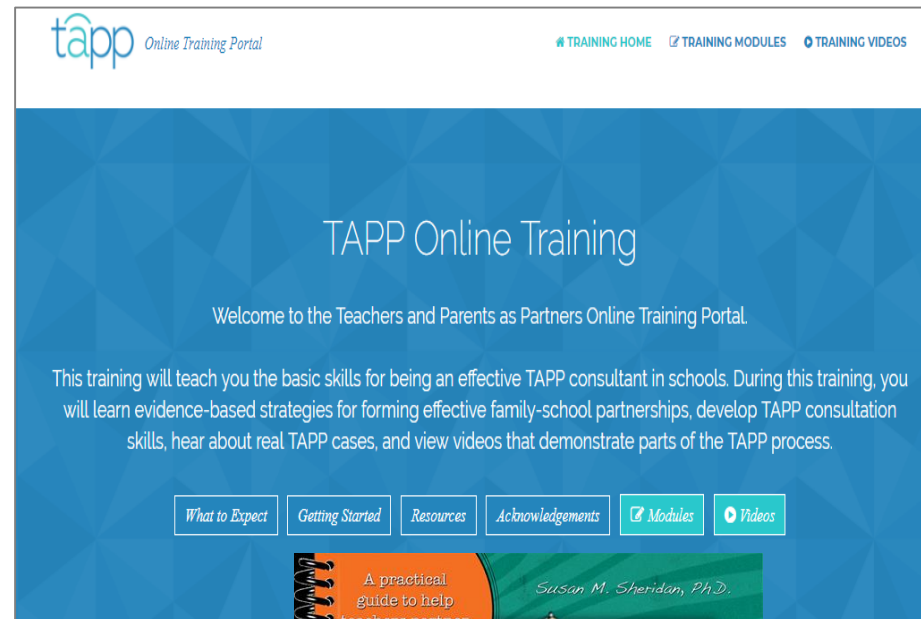
# Takeaways

- Like all relationships, partnership building takes time
- Strategies may not work equally for all students, families and educators
- Parents and teachers are active, essential partners throughout the partnership-building process



# TAPP Resources & Opportunities

- Website: [tapp.unl.edu](http://tapp.unl.edu)
  - Video Examples
  - Research Briefs
  - Online Training



- Sheridan, S. M. (2014). *The tough kid: Teachers and parents as partners*. Eugene, OR: Pacific Northwest Publishers

